



# La Voz

Newsletter of the National Organization of Professional Hispanic  
Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees

August 2005

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## President's Message

*By Bertha Venegas  
NOPHNCSE President*

Congratulations to Mario Morales, Donna Remides, and the planning team for developing an outstanding and technically solid conference.

In keeping with our theme of "Preparing Leaders and Uniting with Partners to Conserve our Natural Resources," our motivational speakers planted the seed that will help our members grow and develop their leadership skills.

For the first time, students were given the opportunity to attend our conference and visit with state conservationists and key staff about the availability of positions in their states. One of the students, Ninfa Romero was hired by North Dakota. Congratulations!

Also for the first time, NOPHNCSE created a forum for representatives



*Bertha Venegas,  
NOPHNCSE President*

from the 1890s schools and the Hispanic Serving Institutions to come together and talk about Technical Service Providers (TSP) diversity and develop and implement a plan to identify, recruit, train, and certify TSPs.

In another first, the Martha Guerra-Arteaga Scholarship of \$1000 was matched with another \$1000 by Mr. and Mrs. D.V. Guerra in honor of their daughter Martha.

For those who were not able to join, be thinking about joining us next year in Florida.

The National  
Council, 2005-2006

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*The family of Martha Guerra-Arteaga present the scholarship given in Martha's name to Alexandra Avila. Pictured left to right: Carmen Guerra, Dario Vidal Arteaga, Gustavo Arteaga, Diego Arteaga, D.V. Guerra, Alexandra Avila, Bertha Venegas, and Enrique Arteaga.*





## New Lifetime Membership Option Available

*by Astrid Martinez, Chair, Membership Committee*

I am excited to tell you that during our business meeting the new lifetime membership payment plan was approved. Thanks to this, our lifetime membership grew by 670 percent (for those who like statistics). Currently the fee for a lifetime membership is \$500.00. With the following payment options you can achieve a lifetime membership:

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Become a  
lifetime  
member.

- 1 payment \$500.00- Due on Jan 1
- 2 payments \$250.00- Due on Jan 1 and July 1
- 4 payments of \$125.00 - Due on Jan 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1
- 5 payments of \$100.00- Due on Jan 1, March 1, May 1, July 1, and September 1
- 8 payments of \$ 62.50 every- 45 days
- 10 payments of \$50.00- every 35 days

These are the rules:

- 1- Choose what type of payment option from the membership form. You can find the form on the website or ask me to email it to you.
- 2- The first payment has to be sent with the application form.
- 3- You have until Dec. 31 of the year you enroll to complete your payments.
- 4- If for some reason you cannot finish by Dec. 31, we will give you until March 31 of the following year to finish your commitment.
- 5- No money will be forfeited.
- 6- If you change your mind or cannot finish the payment plan even with the extension, the money will be credited for future years' dues. No money will be returned.
- 7- The only option for payment right now is by check addressed to NOPHNRCSE.
- 8- **FOR PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS PARTICIPANTS ONLY.** IF you are currently under payroll deduction, you will have to ask your human resources office to stop the deduction on the last pay period of the year. Since the payroll deduction is for next year's fees, you will have a credit of \$30 toward your lifetime membership.

If you still have questions about the lifetime membership, do not hesitate to contact me at [astrid.martinez@ne.usda.gov](mailto:astrid.martinez@ne.usda.gov) or call me at 308-395-8586 ext 123. I hope to hear from you soon!

I want to thank the 24 new lifetime members that have made their commitment. They are:

Sharyn Alvarez	Astrid Martinez
Bertha Venegas	Mary Sanchez
Mario Morales	Flavio Garza Jr.
Rosendo Trevino	Blas M. Saenz Jr.
Salvador Salinas	Arturo Ibarra
Renae Ford	JR Flores
Rosabeth Garcia-Sais	Carlos Suarez
Vincente Sisneros	Patrick Conner
Zaragoza Rodriguez III	JR Martinez
Antonio Resendez	Irma Hernandez
Stella Santos	Fernando Garza
Mike Castillo	Kristin Graham- Chavez



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## Reviewing the constitution and by-laws.

### Constitution and By-Laws Committee Annual Conference Report

On June 30, 2005, Patrick Conner, chair, constitution and by-laws committee, presented a professional development workshop on the current constitution and by-laws and recommendations for changes.

Prior to the workshop, Patrick met with Richard Alvarado, director of consulting services for the Non-Profit Resource Center of Texas, which provides consulting assistance to non-profit organizations. Mr. Alvarado specializes in developing, reviewing, and modifying articles of incorporation, constitutions, by-laws, and policy handbooks of non-profit organizations.

Mr. Alvarado recommended these following changes:

- Have articles of incorporation, mission statement, by-laws, and a policy handbook the only governance documents for NOPHNCSE.
- Eliminate the constitution; parts of this document are in the mission statement, by-laws, and policy handbook.
- Improve the mission statement with concise, non-repetitive wording.
- Streamline the by-laws to meet articles of incorporation requirements.
- Create a policy handbook to define administrative, operational, and management procedures.

The NOPHNCSE national council members currently have draft copies of the mission statement, by-laws, and policy handbook for their review and comment.

After their review, the council will make draft copies available to general membership for review and comment.

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me Patrick Conner at 830-796-3334 or [patrick.conner@tx.usda.gov](mailto:patrick.conner@tx.usda.gov).

### Conference Photos Available

You can get a copy of all of the conference photos on CD for just \$15. Proceeds will go to the scholarship fund.

If you would like to order the photos, send a check for \$15 made payable to NOPHNCSE to Lori Valadez at 51 East

Julie Court, Bozeman, MT 59718.

Thanks to Mike Castillo and all of the conference photographers, members purchased \$135 worth of photo prints at the conference to benefit the scholarship fund.

### Suarez New Deputy STC for California

Carlos Suarez has been selected as the deputy state conservationist for California effective Sept. 4, 2005.

Carlos began his career with NRCS (SCS) in 1990 as a summer intern in Puerto Rico. He has held agency positions as a soil conservationist in West Virginia, district conservationist in Pennsylvania, resource conservationist in Indiana, a watershed advisor assigned to USAID/American Embassy in Nicaragua, assistant state conservationist for field operations in Wisconsin, and most recently served as deputy state conservationist in Nebraska.

Carlos earned a B.S. in agricultural engineering (mechanization) technology from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez, and a M.S. in geoenvironmental studies from Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania.

Carlos is married to Yamilette Suarez, a former NRCS Field Engineer. They have two children: Andrea, 8 years old, and Alex, 5 years old.

### Final Conference Numbers

According to Stella Santos, registration committee chairperson, 142 people registered for and attended the 2005 NOPHNCSE annual conference in Lafayette, Louisiana.